OUTLOOK *for the* BLIND

and THE TEACHERS FORUM

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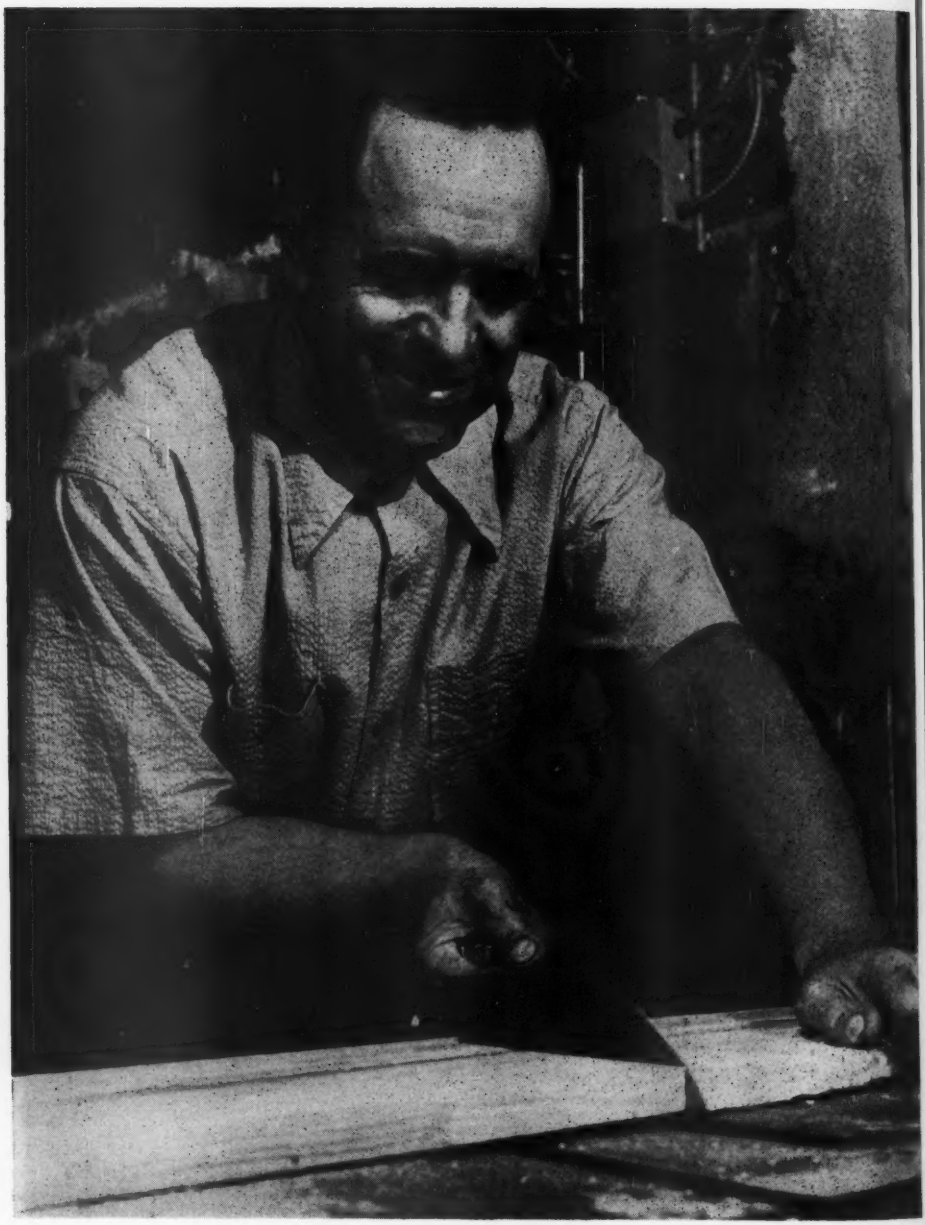

Joe Clunk is quite proud of his home workshop, the equipment which he has adapted for his own use and what he is able to produce there. He has always realized that being able to do things oneself fits a person better to tell both blind workers and seeing employers what blind persons can do.

OUTLOOK *for the* BLIND

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INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

JOSEPH F. CLUNK

IN DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT, I shall try to give you some of the less tangible items which have come to my attention and the industrial placement agents' as well, in our total experience in the placement of students of schools for the blind in production industries during the past thirty years. How to bridge the gaps and provide the understanding necessary for satisfactory industrial employment for these blind students are problems for the teachers to solve and I shall attempt only to indicate the types of problems that are encountered. I am not a teacher in a classroom and I would not presume to tell a group such as this how to teach any subject. Furthermore, I believe there are some elements which affect successful industrial employment more than the development of manual skills and, therefore, I shall not attempt to describe industrial processes or the possibilities of employment for blind persons in production industry. Some of these problems can be identified as follows:

Employer and Employee Relationship. Many students of schools for the blind fail to understand and accept the fact that, when they are given a job anywhere, a contractual relationship exists between them and the employer. This contract is just as definite in its conditions as though it were written and every condition were spelled out in so many words. The employee assumes the obligation of being on time every morning when there is work to be done. Some blind persons seem to believe that they are conferring a favor upon the employer when they accept a job in his plant and that they need come to work only when they are in the mood. They fail

The above address was given during the 1950 convention of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, June 26-30, at Philadelphia, Pa.

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to understand that the employer must have each and every employee on the job on time each morning when the plant is in operation. This does not mean arriving two minutes, five minutes or even thirty seconds late. The blind employee should realize that if the plant employs five hundred persons and if every one of them were five minutes late, twenty-five hundred minutes of production time would be lost to the employer and he cannot afford this luxury. The employee must know that he not only should be on time but, if anything, ahead of time every day. He cannot use blindness as an excuse for being late.

Again the employee must understand that he is supposed to work sixty minutes per hour and not just when he knows the foreman is nearby, that when rest periods are taken the time and frequency must be reduced to a minimum and not expanded to the maximum. The rest room is not a club house in which employees are expected to spend time and find relaxation in talking over their social affairs at considerable length during the working day. Quitting time is at the end of the day and not five or ten minutes before the whistle blows. Blindness cannot be used as an excuse to leave ahead of time to avoid the rush and because you don't want to be crowded in a street car or bus. If anything the blind worker should work a little overtime if he wants to avoid the rush and then he can leave the plant in a leisurely way and avoid the crowds.

One example of that distorted point of view I well remember is that of a young man I had placed on a job in a stove factory. He persisted in whistling and singing and making a lot of noise to entertain himself; and he thought to entertain his co-workers. He was in a very quiet assembly room where it was easy to talk across the room to a fellow employee. Eventually, and it didn't take long, the company ran out of work and laid this man off. At first a day at a time, then two or three days at a time and soon the layoffs were for a week at a time. The factory had plenty of work to do but as far as this worker was concerned they ran out of work because they did not like the disturbing influence. They didn't tell us about it until long after he had been laid off indefinitely; permanently, in their minds, and they finally confessed that they would not have any more work either for him or for any other blind person. They felt all blind persons would create a similar disturbance and would not know how to work harmoniously with other employees. This young fellow was placed a second time and the second job happened to be some distance from his home. I called at the plant where he was placed with considerable frequency during the first three or four weeks of his employment and was never able to find him on the job. Finally, the manager admitted that the young man took a great deal of time off; was seldom on time in the morning, and apparently had to bury several grandmothers, uncles, etc. He used the foreman's telephone to talk to his friends during the working day and in general was a very undependable employee. The manager rather quizzically said to me, "I thought you said these blind persons were anxious to work."

I finally telephoned the young man at his home and asked him why he was so undependable. He replied in this fashion, "Do you know that the manager of that factory doesn't get to work until nine o'clock in the morning and I have to be there at eight. I have to travel a whole hour to get to work and I don't see why I should get to work at eight o'clock when the manager doesn't get there until nine." I informed him that when he became manager, he could set his own hours, but until he was manager, he would have to keep the hours of other factory workers. Then he said, "Do you know that the young fellow who works next to me is two years younger than I am and he gets the same amount of money per day that I do. I

think I should get paid more money because I'm older than he is." I asked him if he was doing more work than his younger sighted associate and, of course, he didn't know. He didn't know how his production compared with the younger sighted worker. Then I had to inform him that he would not be paid any more than his sighted associate unless he did more work and that industry did not pay on an age basis. He refused to accept standard employment conditions and after three or four weeks of tryout, we had to replace him.

I remember another young man who worked right through the depression and because he did ten per cent more work than the sighted girls at the same job he received ten per cent more money. Then he married and in due time a couple of children arrived. He went on a one-man strike because he contended that a married man with a family should get paid more money than a single man. When the company refused to increase his pay on the basis of his domestic responsibilities, he quit the job and we had quite a time keeping that plant open for other blind workers.

This lack of understanding of the relationship between the employer and the employee is responsible for many jobs lost by former students of schools for the blind who have the ability to actually perform the work. They do not accept the unwritten terms of the contract between the employer and an employee because it has never been explained to them, or perhaps because they have never been taught that a contract exists. They not only fail in their jobs but also lose opportunities for other blind persons which result from their lack of understanding or acceptance of the conditions of employer-employee relationship.

Relationship of employees to each other. Often students from schools for the blind fail to recognize or accept the fact that employees in a plant have a teamwork relationship with each other. Just as they are dependent upon their sighted associates to process the materials for them to work upon, even so the sighted workers are dependent upon them to complete their part of the job in order that they too will have materials with which to work. Many blind persons constantly complain about the lack of understanding by sighted associates and of the fact that sighted persons do not cooperate with them. They forget that cooperation is a two-way street and not a one-way thoroughfare. We live in a sighted world and blind persons must cooperate with and fit into that world and not expect the sighted world to adjust to their conception of requirements. If we want the other fellow to understand and cooperate with us, then we certainly must first understand the other fellow and go out of our way to be of friendly service and cooperate with him.

Blind persons must recognize and assume full responsibility for initiative in this matter and not be on the receiving end of whatever good will or friendliness the other person may extend.

Relationship of employee to space, bench and machine. A number of years ago I called upon the superintendent of a large plant and received a very icy reception. The superintendent did not want to see me at all and was not interested in my proposition. Upon being introduced, I said, "Mr. Blank, we fully understand that your plant is designed to produce a certain quantity of material every day and this capacity is based upon the use of space, work benches and machines; that the individual worker is only an auxiliary to the equipment; that it is cheaper for you to have one employee producing five hundred units of work per day and to pay that worker two cents per unit, than it is to have two workers producing the same five hundred units per day, and to pay each of them the same piece work rate as you pay one person, because two workers take up

twice as much space, require double the equipment, washroom facilities, supervision, and all the other operating expenses concerned with production, even though the labor cost is apparently the same." The superintendent turned to me and said, "Young man, I wish all my foremen and employees understood my problems half as well as you do. What can I do for you here?" After that we were on a very friendly basis that resulted in several placements.

Many students from schools for the blind are not informed concerning these basic principles. They seem to think that the employer has ample space, that the work bench and the machine mean nothing; and they are not informed as to the relationship between themselves and the equipment. The employer buys a machine because it is rated to produce a certain quantity of material per day. If the individual worker does not make that machine produce its rated capacity and the employer must buy two pieces of equipment in order to meet his production requirements, then he has extra cost in space, buildings, equipment, power and so forth. The employee is an auxiliary to equipment, and production capacity is not based on the number of persons employed but upon the equipment of the plant. Blind persons must recognize these facts and if they are going to be successful, harmonious, industrial workers, they must accept this relationship and work accordingly.

During the war, two blind persons in two different plants each yielded to the flood of complimentary remarks given them by other employees. They believed that they were superhuman individuals, making a terrific contribution to the employer and that they were entitled to more money per hour than anyone else. They decided in their own minds that they should have at least twenty-five cents more per hour, and since their wages were already equal to those of their sighted associates, twenty-five cents more per hour represented their measurement of comparative worth. Each of them decided to put on a one-man strike and they wrote letters to their employers demanding increases in pay and refused to return to work until the wage increase was granted. So far as I know neither one of them was ever called back to work and they are still out of employment.

Keep safety rules. Too many blind persons when placed in industrial employment have an idea that the safety rules set up by the company and the industry are all foolishness. They think they can take short cuts, that guards and protective devices are unnecessary, and that they know more about safety than the production and safety engineers. When they come into the plant, they refuse to accept the cooperation of other employees in walking through the plant to their places of employment. In doing the job itself, they think, "I can do it better this way and the guard is unnecessary." Some workers operating machines where two-handed controls are used will lock one control down so they can operate the machine with one hand; this usually results in injury. Blind students must be made to understand that the employer and his safety engineers have spent considerable money, time, and much thought in the development of safety patterns for every process. These are not theoretical and must be observed.

Follow instructions accurately. A great many people, especially some of our blind workers, think that they can find an easier or better way of doing the job and frequently this results only in the ill will of the foreman and other supervisory personnel. It is important that the student understand that he must follow instructions completely and accurately. If experience enables him to develop a better way of doing the job, he can do the experimenting on his own time, during a lunch or rest period. If he finds that he has a better method of doing the job, he can pass it on to the foreman for the use of other workers

and secure approval for his ideas; otherwise he should do the job as instructed.

Efficiency of motion. The average sighted new employee watches other workers of greater experience and imitates their methods of doing things. The blind worker cannot use this method of learning and must depend upon his own imagination and habits of motion. Therefore, it is important that the blind student learn to manipulate tools and materials with a minimum amount of waste motion; learn how to analyze motion requirements and establish what the psychologists call "muscle memory" as quickly as possible.

Instead of depending upon frequent repetition in the performance of a task to establish an efficient pattern of motion, a blind worker must analyze quickly the motion requirements of the job and eliminate waste motion as soon as possible. The blind worker must learn the exact location of materials and tools, and that by moving the right or left hand a definite distance at a certain angle while the body is in a particular position, he can perform the process with a minimum amount of motion. The intelligent analysis of motion requirements will enable the blind worker to achieve production speed in the same length of time, or in less time, than the average sighted competitor of equal experience when that sighted person is depending upon constant repetition to produce efficiency of motion.

Avoid putting on a show. Many blind persons yield to the applause of their co-workers and get the idea that they must imitate a circus every day of the week. In fact, the more quickly a blind person can be absorbed into the employee group and forgotten as a novelty, the more assurance that person has for continuing in his employment. More than one placement agent has had the cooperation of an employer terminate within a week or two when the employer said, "This person attracts too much attention on the part of other workers and uses too much time, and we can't afford to have the rest of our staff coming around to see this individual perform every day." Some of our blind students think they are being smart when they try to show how they can go from their place of work, machine or bench, out to the washroom, lunch room, or exit by themselves. They believe they are demonstrating ability when they try to travel in a noisy atmosphere through a labyrinth of trucks and stock piles in and around the plant with a minimum amount of assistance.

These students should be taught that it is not a question of displaying their talents and skills in a circus-like manner that counts—what really counts is the ability to accept the cooperation of their co-workers when needed and to do so in a dignified and inconspicuous manner. There are times when every blind person requires the cooperation of sighted associates and it is foolhardy for him to conduct himself in such a manner as to repel the volunteered cooperation of others. The blind worker who puts on a show in order to arouse the applause of his co-workers is endangering his ability to continue as an employee of that company. The quicker he learns to perform all the functions related to his employment inconspicuously and effectively, the better off he is.

Not only should he accept, he should also solicit the cooperation of co-workers in getting in and out of the plant and from one part of the plant to another whenever he has occasion to travel through the plant. It is important that he establish this pattern of teamwork in the minds of his associates as quickly and as completely as possible and that he gain a reputation for being careful, not foolhardy. It only takes one bruise, one fall, one contact with a truck to completely ruin the goodwill and confidence of the management. Sighted persons may be squeezed between a truck and a workbench without affecting the employment of other people in the plant. The sighted person is simply looked upon as care-

less for being inadvertently caught in a tight corner; but a blind person who gets squeezed between a truck and workbench is immediately considered to have gotten into that predicament because he couldn't see and, therefore, was in danger of personal injury because of blindness. The sighted person may fall downstairs and break a leg and nobody is concerned except himself and the accident department; the blind person who falls downstairs may only be bruised but he scares the management into believing he is in danger of breaking his neck and the more quickly they get rid of him the better. The same thing applies anywhere around the premises. Putting on a show is a dangerous business and our blind students must be taught that this of all things must be avoided.

Avoid exploitation. Frequently blind persons allow their blindness to be exploited. Membership on committees involved in settling controversial subjects should be avoided since some individuals on the opposing side of the argument, either management or employee group, could easily interpret the blind person's activities as emotional pressure used to assist the committee of which the blind person is a member.

Sometimes either management or employee groups play up an individual's blindness rather than his competency in the performance of work. Participation in normal activities by blind workers is desirable but extreme care should be exercised in order to avoid blindness itself being used to influence any discussion or activity, thus losing sight of the mental capacity and personality of the blind worker as an individual.

Take criticism in proper spirit. Visitors to schools for the blind frequently give blind students the impression that they are superhuman individuals, that everything they do is wonderful, marvelous, perfect beyond all criticism and above reproach. When these students go out into production industry and their work is not up to par, they are necessarily subject to critical evaluation by the instructor, the foreman, or anybody having supervisory responsibility. Consequently, when their work is criticized either as to quality or quantity, they resent the evaluation and become belligerent.

It doesn't take many reactions of this kind to isolate the blind person from the foreman or supervisor. No sighted person likes to arouse resentment and rebellion in the mind of a blind associate and when they find that this happens, they cease to criticize, or tell the individual about his faults or behavior but pretty soon the same foreman or supervisor finds it necessary to tell the blind person that the plant is out of material, orders have not come in, the department is closing down for a few days and that the blind person will be called back when there is work. I know of cases where the blind person had been sent home on a temporary layoff but still retained his time clock number, and had been idle for ten years. Of course, the employer never intended to call him back to work. A blind person must be constantly on the alert for criticism; he must not resent it but rather should welcome and encourage it. He must insist upon critical evaluation, repugnant or otherwise from associates, particularly from supervisors who have responsibility for his results. If the blind worker indicates eagerness for critical evaluation and encourages the foreman to tell him every time he is below par in any respect, he will insure his continued employment. Of course, he must also be ready to meet the requirements and standards of the employer, otherwise the criticism or evaluation is of no value to him.

Social behavior with other workers. Many blind persons, particularly those blinded in childhood, seem to work and live in a vacuum. They exist in what might be called a mental hermitage. They completely forget that other people are around them, that other people have ideas, that they have engagements which must be kept, that they can

easily work alone and observe the conduct of the blind person. Such blind persons demand too much service from others and do not look for opportunities to be of service to other people. The blind person who succeeds in his social relationships, whether at work or at play, must be on the alert to recognize and understand his responsibility in social living with other people. We must be even more alert than our sighted friends to find opportunities to repay in friendliness for friendly services received. We must also be on the alert to avoid friction with others.

If we find that a sighted friend is interested in doing something at a certain time, we should avoid conflict of our activity with the activities of the friend from whom we require cooperation. If you are working in a plant and you can accept a co-worker's friendly service in leaving the plant at a time that is convenient to him, it is much better than requesting him to go with you at a time that is inconvenient for him and which may compel him to make a special trip just to accommodate you. The same principle applies in going to the washroom, lunch room, and so on. Coming to work on a street car or bus, it is better to meet a co-worker from the same department at the door, the gate, or on the street and walk in with that individual than to impose upon another employee who works in an entirely different department and who must go out of his way to take you to your place of work.

The person who goes out of his way may not mind it once or even twice but after that he will avoid the blind individual simply because he doesn't want to be inconvenienced. Recognition of social responsibility and social relationships is essential. Very frequently the non-observance of it results in further isolation of the blind person and a denial of friendly cooperation that could result in rebellion and in all sorts of bitterness and disappointment on the part of the blind individual. No one, sighted or blind, has such an excellent personality that he can afford to have it poisoned or warped by bitterness, resentment, ill will, anger, bad temper or any of the other factors which result in the general public's avoidance of him.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Assuming that perhaps none of the schools for the blind are in a position to teach many complete trades or crafts, we have a little different problem in the consideration of vocational training than I have heard discussed in this or any other meeting. This problem might be outlined under specific headings such as:

Complete training in any trade. Practically all schools for the blind have traditionally provided training for blind male students as piano tuners. However, few of our schools have given or are giving the student actual, complete training in even this traditional craft. Some students are taught to pull strings and tune, some are taught to do repairing in addition to the tuning, not all of them are given complete training in these two activities and as a result many of the students have gone forth with a tuning hammer and have been unable to build a business because they did not know how to do repair work.

Unfortunately, many of the schools that give reasonably good training in tuning and repair work fail to complete the training in that they do not teach the youngster how to market his skill and build a business. There is a shortage of piano tuners in this country and yet we find graduate tuners working in sheltered workshops, ordinary factories, and vending stands. These persons are making less money than other tuners who may have less skill in tuning and repair work but who have more ability to build a piano tuning business. This problem only illustrates a result and should direct your attention toward a need for complete training in whatever trade or craft is undertaken in training students in the schools for the blind.

I understand that two schools for the blind have given considerable attention to this question of teaching students how to market their skills. It is time for all the other schools to profit by the total experience and make improvements in their total training techniques. There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether a school for the blind can give complete training in very many types of trades to blind students during their primary and secondary school years. Regardless of the number of trades or crafts which may be taught most of us would agree that a complete job should be done.

Basic understanding of tools and their purposes. Lack of knowledge of basic tools and their uses is a serious problem. This was very apparent in the trainees of the training courses conducted by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for industrial specialists for the blind, and also in many of the clients served by our placement agents. Few students or persons blinded in childhood acquire a reasonable amount of knowledge of basic tools and their purposes.

Many of these blind persons believe that a tap is only something out of which water is secured and they are not aware of the fact that it is also a tool used for threading the inside of a drilled hole in a casting, in metal, wood, plastic or other materials. Many individuals think that a wrench is a twist of some kind and are unaware that it is a tool used by plumbers in tightening or loosening pipes; by mechanics for tightening nuts and bolts, and that there are a great many varieties of wrenches.

Although I had my own sight until I was twenty-three years old, I well remember my complete lack of knowledge of tools and their purposes when I began industrial placement work. In spite of my opportunity to observe tools, I had some queer impressions when a neighbor suggested that I look at a drill press with a fixed jig.

How much less opportunity does the blind student or the youngster blinded in childhood have in acquiring a knowledge of tools. Isn't it a function of our schools for the blind to provide this information and bridge this gap? Every school should be equipped with a stock of the tools most commonly used in the home, on the farm and in the garage. The blind child should become thoroughly familiar with these varieties of tools, their purposes, and uses; so that when someone talks about using a pair of snips, for instance, the blind child won't think he is talking about someone who is impolite, but will know that snips are a type of shears used to cut sheet metal; and that a brace is not necessarily something that is attached to the leg or arm, but that it may be a type of tool used to hold a bit for the drilling of wood, metal and other similar materials.

Use of power. In addition to knowledge of and basic skill in the use of hand tools, the blind student should acquire some knowledge and familiarity with the use of power tools. While it is not necessary to give a complete course in engineering or anything like it, the student should become familiar with and develop a proper respect for the use of power in the performance of work.

Some understanding of power equipment can be provided through a power sewing machine, a small motorized hand drill, a properly guarded as well as unguarded saw and other cutting devices, a wood or metal lathe, tools using compressed air, a drill press, and similar machines. Any kind of power tools with which the student can perform work that will teach him to control and respect power and also observe basic safety measures will serve the purpose.

In conducting our industrial training courses, we find it necessary to give the trainees a week of training in a vocational school with intensive instruction in the use of power tools before we permit them to go into a factory to learn how to demonstrate production processes. We find that many of

the trainees, particularly graduates of schools for the blind, are imprudent in their handling of power machinery and it required minor injuries to teach them respect for safety methods. The vocational school instructors were conditioned to expect this sort of thing and, therefore, no damage resulted to the training program. We learned very early that if a trainee is not going to keep safety rules and have some respect for power and its uses, it is better to teach him a lesson in a vocational school than to have him learn this lesson while demonstrating a job in a production plant where the welfare of other blind persons is at stake.

Character of materials. Many blind persons fail because neither our placement agents nor the individual are informed as to the type of materials that are most compatible to the person's skill. Many people can work easily, readily and with considerable pleasure with cloth and soft materials and are wholly averse to handling hard materials such as iron, steel, plastics and so forth. Some people like to work with foods such as vegetables, meats, candy, etc., and do not like to work with cloth or hard materials and are averse to soft materials. Some people like to work with large, heavy items and are almost driven crazy when they are required to work with small items such as jewelry, and the small parts that go into measuring instruments; and then we have the other group who like to work with small things and who are completely out of place when they are asked to manipulate and handle large, heavy or rough materials.

The schools for the blind should provide an excellent laboratory for testing the reactions of the students and their aptitudes for handling various types and sizes of materials. This acquaintanceship and knowledge of the characteristics of materials will be very helpful to the rehabilitation counselor and to the instructor in the vocational schools when the student is finally ready to begin training for employment. Obviously, there is little use in training a blind person to operate power machinery if he has an aversion to it, or to assemble iron castings if his hands and temperament are not suited to handling that type of material. If he is more at home at a sewing machine and in manipulating cloth and soft materials, making such things as toy dogs and dolls, then he should be placed in work processing such materials and should be kept away from noisy machine shops, punch presses, power machines, grease, dirt, and so on. Other persons revel in being covered with oil and grease and like the noise of a machine shop, using power tools, and handling heavy materials. Everyone should be placed in the kind of industrial atmosphere that is most compatible to his temperament. In this phase of basic training, the student also learns the characteristics of materials such as their texture, elasticity, density or fragility and can work more intelligently and easily with them when placed upon a job.

Selecting occupational interests from general field. The schools for the blind should also serve as the laboratory where the student can experiment with various types of occupations. Is the student going to live and work on a farm? It is possible for most schools for the blind to provide some basic experience in farming during the school year, or to direct it during the summer vacations. If the student is likely to be a salesman or engage in other work in which he would contact the general public, there should be opportunity to try out various types of work involving contact with the public. All the schools for the blind can make experience of this type available to the students by having them work in a neighborhood store, not necessarily in a special stand at the school but in cooperation with an established merchant, where the student could work in the store and serve the general public.

Another type of work tryout can be provided through selling magazine subscrip-

tions, household supplies and equipment, cosmetics and insurance from door to door in city, town or country. Arrangements could also be made for students to give talks to various civic groups such as church organizations, farm associations, fraternal organizations, service clubs, and so on, during the school year when the student can be supervised by the instructors. Students who are interested in the practice of law, osteopathy, chiropractic, massage or teaching can thus be given tryouts in presenting ideas to the public. The ability of the student to put across an idea in a satisfactory manner in talking to a group is an important factor in building up a professional career.

In a similar manner, the student can be given tryouts in mechanical work in a garage; production work in a local bakery or laundry; and in other general fields of occupation in which the student may ultimately be employed. These work experiences are invaluable to the student in adult life regardless of whether the ultimate occupation is manual, clerical or professional. The student cannot help but acquire a reasonably good understanding of the social demands of the sighted world simultaneously with his absorption of occupational information.

Elementary training based on employment possibilities in the home area. There are many students who return to their homes with ideas about occupations which cannot be realized in the home area and yet the students are not prepared for a life away from home. While it is not necessarily true that a blind person, any more than a sighted one, will have either the desire or the ability to work in an available occupation in his home area, yet an analysis of the local employment possibilities can be a first approach to the problem of a lifetime vocation for the blind student.

Many of our blind students return home and lose years waiting for some kind of employment opportunity to be developed for them or for their own imaginations to make use of local resources. The vocational supervisor of the school for the blind in conjunction with the rehabilitation counselor can easily make an analysis of the student's home area regardless of where it is located. In cooperation with the family, they can collectively develop a vocational plan for the student and thus perform the first step in the establishment of a lifetime occupation for the student. Regardless of whether the first, second or third job is the occupation the student desires to pursue as a lifetime career, activity is always better than idleness for no work experience is ever wasted.

Preparation for vocational training after graduation. The suggestions presented in this discussion are obviously not intended to describe industrial education in the sense that the student will be taught specific industrial processes or vocational training given in a complete trade or craft. Rather it is presented with the thought that schools for the blind should provide an opportunity for the student to explore and develop basic understanding of the requirements in all fields of occupations.

Post-graduate vocational training. Many persons are convinced that actual vocational training for young blind persons should be given after the student has left the school for the blind. This includes not only those students who graduate with an academic certificate but also those who leave the school for the blind at the conclusion of their period of learning without an academic certificate.

Since most of the schools for the blind lack the necessary funds with which to provide either complete or varied vocational training, I would like to suggest for your consideration the possibility of developing a separate post-graduate vocational school for blind persons. Perhaps two or more schools for the blind could be consolidated and one of the abandoned schools could then be converted into a national or regional school for

graduates of schools for the blind. It should be possible to secure more adequate financial support and more complete equipment for such a centralized vocational school. Both students and instructors would approach the training with an entirely different point of view than now exists in the average school for the blind. When the vocational training school is planned, developed and operated on the basis that it is actually providing complete training in all phases of every trade listed in the curriculum, that school will have an entirely different reception in the community than if it is simply a high school trying to take on vocational school characteristics.

Many students look upon their present vocational training as a disturbance to their academic program. It is something which they must endure even though it interferes with reading a history book, a novel, playing checkers or poker. After the student has left the school for the blind and is no longer concerned with academic subjects, he will approach a vocational training school curriculum with a more positive attitude than he had during his grade and high school days.

At the present time we are encouraging the use of sighted vocational schools in every part of the United States for training blind persons, particularly for industrial employment. Many of us believe that the blind student should be trained in a sighted group when that student will eventually work in a sighted environment. The present training given blind students in vocational schools for the sighted is not aimed at providing complete trade and craft training but is directed toward the development of skill in the use of hand and power tools and the ability to be acceptable social units with sighted workers.

If the schools for the blind will provide the basic understanding for industrial employment that we have been discussing, cooperate with the rehabilitation agencies, and provide consultant services to the sighted vocational school instructors, it would not be necessary to operate a national or regional vocational school for the blind and we would probably have better adjusted blind workers in every respect.

I would like to leave these thoughts with you for your consideration. I hope the ideas will be of some assistance in your understanding of the problems of rehabilitation counselors when you request them to place one of your students in a lifetime career. You can be of invaluable assistance in building a foundation upon which the vocational rehabilitation counselor can add vocational training and increase the number of successful participants in normal occupations.

AMERICAN BLIND BOWLING ASSOCIATION

The American Blind Bowling Association, which was organized on January 20 in Philadelphia, has a two-fold function: to promote and correlate bowling activity among the visually handicapped men and women of the United States; and to standardize rules and supervise the management of all future national tournaments for blind bowlers.

The purpose of the association is to bring together all teams, leagues and individuals now bowling and also to serve as a clearing house for information and advice to new devotees of the game. The association intends to set up certain standards, rules and regulations governing all national tournaments for visually handicapped bowlers. In order to coordinate bowling activities on a national basis, the association would like to hear about the activities of teams or individual blind bowlers in your area.

The National Blind Bowlers Tournament will be held at Wilkes Barre, Pa., May 25-27 inclusive. All inquiries should be addressed to Leroy Prince, Secretary, American Blind Bowling Association, 618 North New Street, Bethlehem, Pa. Eligibility requirements make early application advisable.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

THE TIME HAS COME when we all look forward to the stimulating and educational meetings of the National Conference of Social Work to be held in Atlantic City, May 13th to 17th. It is here that we refresh our memories about old well-worn theories and catch up with new thinking and developments in our field of work, as well as social work in all of its aspects. It is here also that we regain our perspective and again find our proper place in an overall movement toward a better life for all people.

The American Foundation for the Blind is participating in the Conference by presenting two meetings entirely related to the problems of blindness, and has assisted in the planning of two other programs which deal with problems of the handicapped. These four programs, together with the general and sectional meetings, and personally meeting with people from all parts of the country, should be helpful toward improving our services to blind people in the local community.

Over the centuries, attitudes of sighted people toward blindness have probably been the greatest problem blind people have had to face. These attitudes present one of the major factors in the employment of the blind, as well as their integration into the life of the community. Since these attitudes play such a large part in the lives of the blind, the American Foundation for the Blind began a series of papers at the National Conference of Social Work, discussing them from the points of view of psychology (Gerhard Schauer, "Motivation of Attitudes Towards Blindness," *Outlook for the Blind,* February 1951), and sociology, (Joseph Himes, "Some Conceptions of Blindness in American Culture," *Social Case Work,* December 1950). This year this series will be completed by presenting the problems from the point of view of psychology. Miss Sydell Braverman, who collaborated with Hector Chevigny in his recent book, *The Adjustment of the Blind* is presenting a paper entitled "The Psychological Roots of Attitudes toward the Blind".

Sydell Braverman

Miss Braverman is a clinical psychologist, being most recently associated with the Southbury Training School in Connecticut. She has been psychological assistant at Tucker Hospital in Richmond, Virginia, and was a staff member of the Van Ophuijsen Center in New York. Miss Braverman is well qualified to present this paper since she has actively worked with many types of handicapped people and has also done special research in the field of the blind.

Along with Miss Braverman, Mrs. Jane Devereaux, Supervisor, Social Service De-

Jane Devereaux

partment, Detroit League for the Handicapped, will present a paper on "How can Social Case Work be Effective in the Development of Better Attitudes toward the Blind". Mrs. Devereaux has had many years of case work experience in the field of the handicapped. She is well known to many who are engaged in work with the adult blind and has attended courses at the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan, where she teaches case work in the summer sessions sponsored by the American Foundation for the Blind.

Mr. M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director, American Foundation for the Blind, will discuss these two papers. Mr. Barnett, himself blind, is in an excellent position to apply the theoretical to the practical aspects of the problems presented. He is vitally interested in the problems of assimilation and integration of the blind in the normal community; problems resulting from the attitudes of the sighted toward blindness.

The second meeting will be a luncheon at the Madison Hotel. Reassimilation of the disabled within the community is not something which can be done for the community, it is development within the community itself. Both rehabilitation of the handicapped and social case work are important community services which affect the life of the blind. Mr. Kenneth W. Hamilton in his paper on "Community Services for the Blind" will discuss how these two services can be brought more closely together. Mr. Hamilton is associate professor of Social Administration at Ohio State University. He is not only teaching the techniques of rehabilitation in the first organized curriculum ever attempted at the university level, but has also been an active worker in the field. In 1950 he published the book *Counseling the Handicapped in the Rehabilitation Process* where he discusses how everybody can help constructively in bringing confidence, competitive capacity, and self-reliance to the impaired.

M. Robert Barnett

This paper will be discussed by Edgar B. Porter, Associate Chief, Guidance, Training and Placement Branch, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, Washington. Since 1944 Mr. Porter has been employed in the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Rehabilitation Standards Division with particular interest in the area of personnel training. Prior to his appointment in Washington, he was employed as a counselor in the New York City office of the

State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

One other meeting of special interest to workers for the blind is under the combined sponsorship of the National Committee on Sheltered Workshops and Homebound Programs, the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, and the American Foundation for the Blind. More and more our government accepts responsibility for the establishment and growth of rehabilitation services. What are the unmet needs in the rehabilitation picture and where can cooperative effort, public and private, help to meet them? Miss Mary Switzer, Chief, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., will discuss the role of government in rehabilitation in a

Edgar B. Porter

paper entitled "The Federal Agency Looks at its Rehabilitation Program, both Present and Future". The private agency focus in rehabilitation will be discussed by Lawrence Linck, Executive Director, National Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc. These two papers will be discussed by Dr. Morton Seidenfeld of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, New York, and Dr. John Chapman, Regional Director, United States Public Health Service.

Kenneth W. Hamilton

Everyone actively interested in work for the blind, at some time or other has contact with a sheltered workshop. On Thursday morning, May 17th, the National Committee on Sheltered Workshops and Homebound Programs presents its special program. Sheltered workshops throughout the country provide employment for hundreds of individuals and produce a tremendous amount of marketable goods. In so doing they cut across labor and industry, and they justify our consideration in terms of further responsibilities to labor, government, industry, and the individual client served.

Colonel John M. Smith, Executive Director, Institute for Crippled and Disabled, New York City, will preside. Miss Louise McGuire, Specialist, Handicapped Worker Problems, United States Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., will discuss the topic, "How does the Government help in the Operation of Sheltered Workshops?" Other topics to be discussed at this meeting are the responsibilities of the sheltered workshop to labor, and the responsibility of the sheltered workshop to the individual.

One of the most valuable services which the American Foundation for the Blind provides at the National Conference is consulta-

tion on all phases of work with the blind. Various members of the Foundation staff, as well as others in special fields of work, will be available to discuss administrative and service problems with anyone requiring such information. The booth is located in the Convention Hall close to the registration desk. Literature will be available for distribution.

Books and pamphlets relating to work for the blind and the deaf-blind will be on display in the general book exhibit of the Conference. Here everyone has the opportunity to take the time to look over the publications and select those which meet individual needs.

From this description of the programs to be presented for your special interest you will see that every effort has been made to make your trip to Atlantic City profitable. We urge you to attend not only the meetings relating to the blind and the other physically handicapped, but also the section meetings and the general sessions. We are looking forward to meeting you personally in Atlantic City. So that you can make definite plans for your attendance, we present a synopsis of the programs described above.

Tuesday, May 15, 1951—9:15 to 10:45 A. M.

1. The Federal Agency Looks at its Rehabilitation Program, both Present and Future.

   Miss Mary Switzer, Chief
   Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
   Federal Security Agency
   Washington, D. C.

2. Private Agency Focus on Rehabilitation

   Lawrence Linck, Executive Director
   National Society for Crippled Children and Adults

   Discussants:

   Dr. Morton Seidenfeld
   National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis
   New York, N. Y.

   Dr. John Chapman, Regional Director
   United States Public Health Service

Thursday, May 17, 1951—9:15 to 10:45 A. M.

General Topic: The Sheltered Workshop Faces its Obligation to the Community.

1. How does the Government help in the operation of Sheltered Workshops?

   Miss Louise McGuire, Specialist, Handicapped Worker Problems
   United States Department of Labor
   Washington, D. C.

2. The Responsibilities of the Sheltered Workshop to Labor

   To be announced.

3. The Responsibility of the Sheltered Workshop to the Individual

   To be announced.

Thursday, May 17, 1951—Luncheon—Madison Hotel, 1:15 to 3:30 P. M.

1. Community Services for the Blind

   Kenneth W. Hamilton
   Associate Professor of Social Administration
   Ohio State University
   Columbus, Ohio

   Discussant:

   Edgar B. Porter, Assistant Chief
   Guidance Training and Placement Branch
   Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
   Federal Security Agency
   Washington, D. C.

Thursday, May 17, 1951—Madison Hotel, 4:00 to 5:30 P. M.

1. The Psychological Roots of Attitudes Toward the Blind

   Miss Sydell Braverman, Clinical Psychologist

2. How can Social Case Work be Effective in the Development of Better Attitudes Toward the Blind?

Mrs. Jane Devereaux, Case Work Supervisor
Detroit League for the Handicapped
Detroit, Michigan

Discussant:

M. Robert Barnett, Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind
New York, New York

FOUNDATION SPONSORS FOUR-DAY WORK SESSION DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF THE BLIND PRESCHOOL CHILD

The American Foundation for the Blind is sponsoring a four-day work session dealing with the problems of blind children of preschool age. The dates for the conference will be from April 12 through April 16. This is the second national meeting that the Foundation has held in New York where people from all parts of the country have been invited to convene and pool their professional efforts in behalf of improved service to the very young blind child and his parents.

The Foundation is attempting a group dynamics approach at this work session. The participants have been invited to report to the meeting prepared for four days of intensive work in an effort to develop standards for the evaluation of existing programs as well as to suggest desired goals for future projects.

Carefully selected participants have been invited to take part in this type of procedure. There has been an attempt to secure the service of individuals who have actually engaged in work with young blind children or who have made outstanding contributions in closely related professions.

The participants are from ten different states in this country, and two are from Canada. The fields of professional service which will be represented are: ophthalmology; pediatrics; child development; psychology; psychiatry; education; and social work. They represent public and private agencies for the blind schools and classes for the blind, general hospital service, the United States Department of Education, the Children's Bureau, and physicians representing medical schools of universities in different parts of the country.

The participants will divide their efforts into four work groups and it is to be hoped that there will be four booklets published which will reflect the efforts and the combined opinion of this group.

The subjects of the four work groups are to be as follows: Group No. I, Evaluation of Existing Research Affecting Blind Children and Suggested Future Projects to be Developed; Group No. II, The Development of Professional Services to Parents of Blind Children; Group No. III, Evaluation and Clarification of the Functions and Purposes of the Various Types of Programs Established to Meet the Needs of Preschool Blind Children; Group No. IV, Suggested Standards for the Training of Professional Workers Dealing with Preschool Blind Children.

The Foundation will observe with keen interest the techniques and final results of this type of procedure. This plan represents a serious effort to develop professional material on the part of a group consisting of people who are actually engaged in the type of service about which they are writing.

Much commendation and sincere thanks are due those people who are willing to contribute their time and efforts to this important venture. When the results of the work session are available, they will be published as an educational service of the American Foundation for the Blind to further the best possible future efforts of those who are working with young blind children.

CANE SEAT REPAIRING AND REED BASKET WEAVING

PAUL R. BRYANT

CANE SEAT REPAIRING and reed basket weaving have become such an important part of so many of the workshop programs throughout the United States and Canada, that a story about the origin of cane and reed may prove interesting to many, particularly those who use these products. The source of these materials has never been very widely publicized, resulting in a lack of accurate information. Most people know that both cane and reed are vegetable growths but beyond that fact public knowledge is extremely limited.

It may surprise many to know that cane is stripped from rattan, leaving an inner core, known as reed. Rattan such as is used in our products is a vine which grows wild in the jungles of several islands in the South Pacific. It is sometimes confused with bamboo, merely because its appearance is somewhat similar. But briefly, bamboo is hollow, while rattan has a solid center. Also, bamboo tapers rapidly, and rattan has only a slight taper.

Practically all rattan used for commercial purposes comes from Borneo, Java, Sumatra or Celebes. These islands, located in the South Pacific, are a part of a group forming the United States of Indonesia, formerly known as the Dutch East Indies. There are types of rattan growing in other tropical areas but none quite as suitable for making cane and reed as those growing in the East Indies. There, the constant heat and heavy rains provide just the right sort of climate for the fast growing vines.

There are probably as many as 150 different varieties of rattan, although only a dozen or so of the species are suitable for our purpose. At maturity the various types will be from ⅛″ to about 1½″ in diameter, with larger sizes the exception. While each species has its proper botanical name, the natives prefer to use more descriptive Malayan names, such as Tohiti, Kooboo, Loontie, Pakkie, and Oemoeloe, to identify the rattans with the particular region in which they grow, or in some instances to describe the processing they receive.

The task of cutting and harvesting rattan presents the problem of penetrating into the thickest jungles, as that is where the choice growths are apt to be found. Armed with a wicked-looking wide-blade knife, natives of all ages work their way through the jungle, slashing off the wild growing rattan vines about three feet from the ground. Cutting at this height leaves the plant root alive to produce another growth which will mature in about seven years.

The vine is left hanging while the natives continue deeper into the jungles, cutting as they go. On returning to the original cuttings in a few days, the dark bark has dried out, and loosened itself, while the treacherous needles have softened and lost a good deal of their sting. In pulling down cut vines much of the bark with thorns is removed. The vines are then cut into lengths of from fifteen to thirty feet, bent into bundles, and

Paul R. Bryant is an official of the Commonwealth Manufacturing Company, Gardner, Massachusetts.

carried to the nearest stream. As mechanical transportation is impossible, the rattan is moved either by buffalo or oxen, or in many cases by the natives themselves.

Eventually the harvested stock reaches the stream, and on native boats of various types and descriptions is transported to a "Godown" on the seacoast. "Godown" is the native name for the warehouse plant at which the various jungle products are accumulated for preparation and shipment abroad. Rattan normally is taken to "Godowns" in Makassar, the main shipping port of Celebes, or to Singapore. At these points the sticks are thoroughly washed, this being accomplished by taking the rattan into shallow sandy bottom streams, and rubbing the sticks with the fine, clear sand from the bottom.

Next, the rattan is picked for quality, sorted for size, then given a sulphuring treatment. The latter serves the dual purpose of bleaching the color, and preventing insect infestation. The final operation at the "Godown" is the bundling by size and quality, and loading on the seagoing vessels for the journey to their destination, which, in our case, is the port of Boston. Rattan sticks as we receive them, yellow in color, will run from about twelve to twenty-two feet in length, and from about 7/16″ to 1⅛″ in diameter, with the larger diameter sticks being the shortest in length. All rattan tapers somewhat, so that in an eighteen foot length there may be from 1/16″ to ⅛″ difference in diameter. At regular intervals along the length of the stick are ring marks, which are known as joints. These are the points on the vine at which the leaf stem grows.

The first step in the processing of rattan into cane and reed products is a resorting for size. In this process, sticks which are unsuitable because of poor color, or any other defects are removed. Accurate sizing is essential, as the range of sizes which a splitting machine can run with one set-up is limited. Following this operation the rattans are given a liquid bath, preparatory to the start of actual machining. The purpose of the bath is twofold—to remove surface dirt accumulated in transit, and to soften the rattan to the proper point for splitting.

The splitting operation begins by feeding the long sticks into a specially constructed machine which strips off the outside enameled surface into several segments. These segments which are rough cut will be as long as the original sticks, and will be uneven in width and thickness. However, the center core, or reed, as it is known, will be round and uniform in diameter. The rough strips taken from the outside of the sticks are next run through shave machines to obtain a uniform width and thickness, and provide cane in its final form.

At this point we have two products, chair cane and round reeds in various diameters. The chair cane will be sorted for quality and length of strands, and prepared in thousand-foot bunches for sale as hand weaving cane, or prepared for use on our cane weaving looms. We will first consider the cane for weaving on power looms.

As in any machine weaving, the continuous strand is necessary for the warp. This is not as simple with cane as it might be with a soft, fine material which could be spliced by tying. With cane, both ends of the strand must be skived, overlapped and spliced with a hot type of cementing compound, which would set immediately as the strands are wound on warp spools. From the natural lengths of twelve feet to twenty-two feet a continuous strand is made, which may run up to a length of two thousand feet or more.

The principles of a cane weaving power loom are fundamentally the same as any weaving loom, but in view of the character of the cane, methods and techniques are necessarily different. Cane is a coarse, hard and bulky material. It has a right and a wrong side, and unlike a round thread or cord,

guides are required to keep the oval glossy surface in proper position at all times.

It is not possible to operate a cane loom at the high speeds which are normal with many other types of looms, nor is it possible for an operator to run a battery of looms, for the feeding of the filling or checking strands require constant attention. Although uniformity in size of the strands can be pretty well controlled, other factors such as the color and texture of a nature grown material makes it necessary to combine a careful inspection with practically every operation in the manufacturing and weaving of cane.

It will be interesting to note at this point that cane weaving is a highly specialized skill. Although strictly a machine operation, there is an element of craftsmanship involved. A skilled weaver must have or acquire a knowledge of the characteristics of cane, as well as possessing a mechanical sense to qualify as a power loom operator.

Many of the workshops have hand weaving looms for making rugs and other types of fabrics. There will be some minor differences between the various looms, but fundamentally the operation of them and the weaving process will be the same. Anyone familiar with such looms can obtain a pretty good mental picture of a power cane weaving loom if they will merely visualize each step in the weaving being automatically operated. One big difference is in the feeding of the woof or as we call them, the checking or filling strands. Instead of using a bobbin with cane wound around it, the bulkiness of the cane strands makes it necessary to feed each strand separately, and this is done mechanically by what is known as a needle shuttle. The movement of the needle shuttle, the beater, or comb, as it is called on a cane loom, and the winding of the woven fabric is all synchronized so that each step in the cycle is perfectly timed. This machine produces only the warp and woof, and it is necessary to transfer the partially woven fabric to other machines in order to insert the diagonal strands which make up the hexagonal weave by which the finished product is known. In order to obtain the different meshes, it is necessary to use strands of different widths. This requires different size harnesses and combs, as well as different gears for different timings in the various steps.

After the diagonal strands have been inserted in both directions, the completed rolls of woven cane are then run across inspection and mending tables. Every inch of the cane weave is inspected, and any defects which may have occurred in the weaving operation are corrected. As the cane is always woven wet it is then necessary to hang the material for drying purposes. The weaving operations in making close woven cane webbing are quite similar, although the operations for inserting the diagonal strands are eliminated.

While the various steps in the weaving of cane have been going on, the round reed which resulted from the original cutting operation has gone to another department where any number of things may happen to it. The diameter of the round reed will, of course, depend upon the original diameter of the rattan, but it may be anywhere from ¾″ to 3/16″ in diameter. The larger-sized reeds may be sold in their original round shape, or possibly split in half and sold as half-round reeds, or even quarter-round reeds. Under other circumstances the large reeds will be run through specially built machines to strip off weaving strands known as grooved oval reeds. The name is descriptive, the bottom side of the reed will be grooved, and the top side will be oval. With each stripping of grooved ovals the diameter of the reed will be reduced proportionately; the smaller diameter may then be cut into flat oval weaving strands, or even flat strands, all depending upon what the particular need may be at the time. Round reeds are made with diameters as small as 1/32″, or as large as ¾″. In order to obtain the very small diameters, a larger

reed is run through cutting machines which will turn out several strands of the very small sizes. To obtain a smooth-cut, perfectly round-shaped reed is the objective of all of the manufacturers in the rattan cutting trade, but methods may differ. While the cutting machines may be fundamentally the same throughout the trade, there are different ideas as to the best type of cutting tool. Most manufacturers make their own cutting knives according to their own specifications.

Practically all of the reed products used in the various workshops are either for reseating purposes on chairs such as the porch type, or the straight back kitchen chair used largely throughout the South. There are a number of workshops, however, which carry on reed basket weaving projects, and many other types of useful articles can be hand made from reeds. At one time hand woven reed furniture was widely used in the United States, but changes in styles and taste have influenced practically all of the former reed furniture manufacturers to discontinue their reed weaving in favor of wood and metal furniture. There is, however, still a large amount of reed furniture still in use in this country.

This is but a brief summary of the transition of the wild-growing jungle vine into the hand woven cane seat, or perhaps hand woven reed baskets so familiar to many of the workshops throughout the nation.

JOHN B. CURTIS DIES

On February 17, one of the outstanding pioneers in work for the blind passed away in Chicago. John B. Curtis had been born there in 1871 and had spent little of his life elsewhere. He lost his sight when about ten years old, and attended the Illinois School for the Blind for several years. He then went to the Hyde Park High School in Chicago and later was awarded both the A.B. and the M.A. degrees at the University of Chicago.

Following a few years as a high school teacher at the Illinois School for the Blind, he was selected for the newly created position of supervisor of braille classes in the Chicago public schools. This was the first undertaking in this field and the choice of Mr. Curtis as head of the project was fortunate. He had obtained most of his education in public schools and he believed that blind pupils should not be segregated in a special room and have all of their work with one teacher, but that they should attend as many classes as possible with seeing pupils, doing the same work and being held to the same standards. This philosophy and practice have been almost universally adopted throughout the United States.

The Braille classes, started in 1900, were followed by sight-saving classes in 1913, and the same philosophy and procedure were extended to these. Therefore, Mr. Curtis' pioneer work has influenced day school classes for the visually handicapped throughout the country.

Mr. Curtis was a representative on the Commission on Mathematical and Chemical Notation of the International Conference on the Blind proposed for 1933; and was one of the compilers of the second American revision of *Braille Mathematical Notation*. His devising and adaptation of special equipment for the education of the blind and his progressive ideas and methods in teaching, although they naturally were not heralded abroad, were wholesomely influential in the field.

Mr. Curtis' outstanding characteristics were originality, sincerity and extreme modesty. Because of his retiring personality he never received from workers with the blind the recognition which he deserved. The principal honor which he received, and of which he was exceedingly proud, was the Migel Medal for Outstanding Service to the Blind, which was presented to him in 1945.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE BLIND GARDENER

NELSON COON

SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST, I have indicated in this magazine the values of gardening for both the adult blind and the pupils in a school for the blind. I have discussed the many reasons why gardening is such a helpful exercise for both the body and the mind, and I have given some practical gardening suggestions.

Some years have intervened since those previous articles, and it may be helpful to tell of at least one new development and consider some of the old ideas.

With the arrival of April there comes to everyone the urge to get out into the open and to make things grow. This natural desire is felt by the visually handicapped as well as the seeing. Not all people will share this urge to the point of accomplishment, but, for those who do, here are some suggestions.

The garden for the blind man or woman need not be a large one. I know of one man who confined his gardening to a narrow plot of ground running between the house and the path for only some thirty feet. Here, in easy reach, he had great success with a few simple things such as tomatoes, and the rewards to him of working out-of-doors were just as great as if he had a quarter-acre plot. A garden of even 200 square feet will produce an amazing quantity of food if carefully planned, and with the blind especially, the ease of access is of prime importance.

My experiences with students in my classes at Perkins Institution some years ago were such that I know that there are few adjustments which have to be made for the visually handicapped. Spading the garden *is* rather a difficult operation, but it is not at all impossible. In these days of rototillers, however, it is usually possible to get someone to till the soil in advance and perhaps even apply fertilizer.

The next step of planting the garden entails only the use of such methods as are normal for any good gardening. A small plot can be marked out by measuring the planting distances at both ends of the plot, marking with stakes, and then stringing tight strings between the proper stakes both on the ground level and at a higher guiding level. The actual planting can be done by laying a long board along the edge of the string and making the row close up against the edge of the board; and, at the conclusion of planting, moving the board to the next string.

The most difficult thing for the blind is the identification of the sprouted row of seedlings, and the best suggestion which I have for this is to mix a little radish seed with all small seeds before planting. These radishes come up quickly, within just a few days, and identify the row so that weeding between the rows can be done even before such plants as carrots are tactually findable. The radishes may be eaten if desired or just discarded, after having served their purpose as markers.

Perhaps one of the most valuable aids to the blind gardener has only recently been made available, and that is, pelleted seeds. The bugbear of any gardener has always been in trying to properly space in the row

Nelson Coon is librarian at Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind.

such tiny-seeded plants as carrots, onions, and the like. Now science has come to his aid in the form of little round pellets, each containing one seed. This means that the pellets, which are easily spaced in the row, will produce plants in just the right number and right location without the tiresome and difficult thinning operation. The beauty of this method is that, not only are the seeds easy to handle, being the size of an ordinary pill, but each seed is provided in the material of the pellet, with fertilizer to use in its first days, as well as the proper amount of fungicide and growth hormones to stimulate and protect the young plant.

These pelleted seeds are available in a good selection of vegetable and flower varieties such as most people would want to grow. A few seed stores have some of these to offer, but the principal source of supply seems to be the Burgess Seed and Plant Company, Galesburg, Michigan. This company would doubtless be glad to send a catalog to anyone requesting it. They have ready for sale in pellet form the following varieties of seeds: tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, onions, beets, cabbage, peppers, cucumbers, melons, sweet corn; zinnias, sweet peas, marigolds, asters, calendulas, and morning glories.

The care of the garden after the seeds come up is, of course, of great importance, and here not only careful observation is necessary to learn the characteristics of the plants versus the weeds, but a measure of diligence and interest. Some few years ago, special tools were invented and marketed to aid in the care of the garden by the blind, but it is the opinion of the author that nothing has as yet equalled the old-fashioned garden hoe or the short-handled cultivator as directed by inquiring fingers.

I can perhaps best sum up the matter by quoting the blind English gardener, Frank Eyre, in the National Institute *Monograph* on the subject of gardening: "There is, in short, plenty of assistance to be had, but, as in all other occupations, the results obtained will depend upon one's own good right arm and capacity for 'sticking it'. Books are good, but experience is the only teacher that has gained all the degrees. There is a fascination about gardening that never palls. No blind gardener will ever be liable to the mental deterioration which comes of having nothing to do. He cannot expect to produce stuff by the truck load with his own unaided labor, but it is work that pays, in time, in open air health and in the satisfaction of producing good things."

The Book of (Talking) Books. The Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress has arranged to distribute an additional 150 copies of the Bible to the twenty-seven regional talking book libraries, making a total distribution of 350 complete sets of the Bible on records. The Bible is by far the most popular talking book ever recorded.

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CHIT CHAT
FROM THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

BUILDING AND MODERNIZING are the order of the day in many schools for the blind. Leading the parade are the states of Tennessee and Ohio.

P. B. Stephens, superintendent of the Tennessee School for the Blind, reports that a "complete, new school," costing approximately $3,000,000, should be ready for use next fall. The school site was formerly the property of President Andrew Jackson and is located six miles from Nashville. Thirteen buildings comprise the physical plant: administration, six dormitory buildings, hospital, recreation building, vocational building, laundry, heating plant, and superintendent's house. The recreation building will have a gymnasium, skating rink, swimming pool and bowling alley. New furniture is planned for all buildings. The campus will comprise one hundred acres.

Construction of a brand new school for the blind for the state of Ohio began January 22, 1951, according to W. G. Scarberry, superintendent. The completion date is set for July 15, 1952, unless labor and materiel shortages intervene. Cost of the plant has been set at well over $3,000,000. Equipment and furnishings will require $750,000.

Edward W. Tillinghast, superintendent of the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind, writes that two new buildings were put into operation at the opening of the 1950-51 school year. They are a primary building and infirmary. The former houses fifty-two children and provides classroom space, playrooms, etc. All children under ten years of age live here during the school year, and attend classes. The infirmary contains eighteen beds for children, treatment and examination rooms, and quarters for two nurses.

At the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, a $370,000 recreation building is now under construction. This building will contain gymnasiums for both blind and deaf pupils along with shower rooms, lockers and offices for physical education teachers; special quarters are being provided for scout activities, etc. William T. Heisler, principal of the department for the blind, adds that construction will take some twelve to eighteen months. After that a dormitory building for blind girls, costing $280,000, will be erected; this structure will also have dining room facilities and piano practice rooms.

The Illinois School for the Blind now has the use of a modern auditorium equipped with 385 individual opera chairs. According to the *Welfare Bulletin,* published by the State of Illinois (October 1950), other modern features include: aisle lights built in the base of the chairs; floor illumination from lights at the base of walls; acoustic tile; automatic temperature control. Color is everywhere in evidence in the richly-furnished auditorium; this ranges from crimson to green to gold. The site of the auditorium is the "north wing" which formerly housed the old dining hall and chapel. Leo J. Flood, superintendent of the Illinois School for the Blind, states that a number of other improvements have been made recently, such as installation of acoustic tile in the corridors of the main building; the building of six fire screen doors in the main building; equipment of a recreation room in the full basement under the new auditorium. Present projects call for installa-

tion of new light fixtures in all classrooms to bring them to sight saving levels.

Annabelle C. Davis, director of the social service department, reporting for the Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind, (Alton G. Kloss, superintendent) writes that the physical plant is undergoing a complete "face-lifting". The kitchen, industrial building and several offices have been transformed through new equipment, pastel paint, fluorescent lighting, plastic tile and other innovations.

Oklahoma is in the process of building a new gymnasium at its school for the blind, V. R. Carter, the superintendent, reports. Costing $124,385, this is the last unit to be rebuilt following a tornado which wrecked virtually every building on the campus on April 12, 1945. Construction will probably be completed by April or May.

By May 1951, a $350,000 school building should be ready at the Oregon School for the Blind, Everett Wilcox, principal, writes. This is the first structure of several to be built on the basis of long-range planning. The building is designed to care for a minimum of one hundred pupils in the first nine grades. Controlled illumination and other modern features have been incorporated in the building's design.

A senate concurrent resolution has been introduced in the 1951 session of the North Dakota legislature, providing a constitutional amendment to permit the moving of the school for the blind from Bathgate. If the resolution, introduced by the legislative research committee, passes both houses, it will be submitted to the voters in June, 1952. Herbert D. Jeffrey, superintendent, adds that a similar proposal was defeated by voters in the June 1950 primary, 77,092 to 74,927. The Board of Administration wants to move the school because Bathgate is a small community and is not centrally located.

On March 2 and 3, the Eastern Athletic Association for the Blind sponsored its fifth annual wrestling tournament at the North Carolina School for the Blind at Raleigh. Expected to participate were eighty-five wrestlers from Batavia, Perkins, Overbrook, Connecticut, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky and, of course, North Carolina. Eleven weight classes are represented. Handling the details of the tournament are Francis Andrews of Maryland and Joseph J. Kerr of Overbrook.

The Midwestern Athletic Association for the Blind, patterned after the very successful Eastern Athletic Association for the Blind, swung into action February 23-24 at the Missouri School for the Blind. Some eight schools were invited to participate.

Tandem bicycles are very popular at the Arizona School. Pupils with travelling sight pedal and operate the front while those without sight pedal from the rear. Two articles have appeared in national bicycle magazines with pictures and stories of Arizona's blind cyclists.

J.C.L.

UNIFORM BRAILLE FOR ASIA AND AFRICA

A standardized braille alphabet to serve five million blind persons in the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia and Africa was agreed upon at the Unesco conference held in Beirut, Lebanon from February 12-17. This supplemented conferences at Unesco House, Paris, in December 1949 and March 1950.

The alphabet, which was developed by delegates, some of them blind, of eleven nations, is designed to replace more than twenty local braille scripts now in use in these regions. It closely follows the script which was worked out by Louis Braille in 1829.

The enlarged basic alphabet agreed upon at Beirut uses the original braille symbols for corresponding sounds in Asian and African languages, but adds signs for extra letter-sounds in such languages as Arabic, Hindustani and Malay. In Asia it will cover all

braille writing with the exception of the ideographic languages used in China, Korea, Indo-China and Japan.

One of the effects of this agreement will be to increase the amount of literature available to blind readers in these areas, according to Sir Clutha Mackenzie, Unesco's braille consultant. Sir Clutha, a New Zealander who was blinded in the Gallipoli campaign of World War I, explained that previously publishers were reluctant to produce books in local braille scripts which could reach only a limited audience.

The Beirut conference, whose decisions are subject to final ratification by the governments represented, followed nearly eighteen months of discussions and preparatory work by Unesco with the object of creating a world alphabet in braille for blind readers in all languages. The eleven nations taking part in it were: Ceylon, Egypt, French North Africa, Hashimite Jordan, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Malaya, Pakistan, Persia and Syria.

Another conference will be held later this year to iron out local differences in the braille scripts used by Spanish-speaking countries.

FROM MY ORINDA GARDEN

RICHARD S. FRENCH, PH.D.

THE ACCEPTANCE BY THE BLIND of a life of passive receptivity has been traditional. The attitude is best expressed by a Japanese visitor who was the head of one of the large "blind" schools of Japan. He was on a trip to America to study our methods and, as I remember, California was his first stop. Following my custom of giving visitors complete freedom to see whatever was to be seen and to learn what they could without officious "guidance," I turned this fine gentleman loose to wander about and see the children as they were, in classes and shops, on the playgrounds and in dormitories, at their assigned work and in their self-directed activities. After some hours of such vistitation I looked our guest up and found him in the class which was the pride of the school, the problem-project class directed by Mrs. Schroder, a woman of exceptional education and unlimited resourcefulness. The sixth grade group was just completing a project on the pioneer migration to California, the 49'ers and those who followed in the early 50's being there with their horses and oxen, their covered wagons and other possessions. History and literature, geography and economics, the manual arts shop, the sewing classes and the dramatics workshop had all contributed to the ensemble. The children went about both their work and their showmanship as naturally and as unselfconsciously as if they were in a free game, unobserved, on the playground.

As I entered the classroom, our visitor exclaimed, "Why, these children can't be blind! They do not *act like blind children.*" So I went over the list with him. Out of seventeen or eighteen in the group, twelve were totally blind, six or seven had partial vision but could not read even sightsaving print, and only one was in the sightsaving group. Most of these same children refused, as they grew up, to *act like blind adults.* Social and economic pressure in the long run overwhelmed some of them and they learned to *act like blind persons,* but most did not;

and one of them is now a distinguished professor of public speaking in a great university and a member of the state board of social welfare, another is a guidance counselor and placement officer, and still others out of that small group are outstandingly successful in their several ways. What follows in this and the three or four succeeding "musings" will carry further my pet thesis that "blind people act blind" chiefly because most seeing people think they must act blind and won't let them act otherwise.

Thus there are created "centers for the blind," camping grounds for blind children (at enormous expense) where the environment of blind schools and blind classes is further reinforced by a blind vacation! Very different are some of the vacations and recreational trips in which your reporter participated as companion and fellow learner, with small groups selected only by age and common interests. That all the participants were men and boys is purely incidental.

By way of preface it should be said that for thirty years the Berkeley Lions Club has sponsored the Boy Scout troop in the California School for the Blind and in addition to the usual activities has provided one annual camping trip, for some years in the Berkeley Redwood Park at Cazadero, then in the Lokoya Summer Resort, near Napa City, and latterly at the "Y" camp on the Gualala River in the wilds of Sonoma County. On the few occasions when my duties as superintendent permitted my going, I spent a day or two with the men of the club and our boys, enjoying immensely their activities and especially the campfires and evening entertainments. I enjoyed still more long hikes and fishing trips, usually with one other man and from one to three boys. The top of enjoyment came when three adults, Dr. Perry, the boys' supervisor and I, took a group of twelve high school boys on an eight day trip to the Cazadero Park during the spring recess of the Oakland University High School. But of this there is so much to relate that it must be postponed to a later date. For this time I am selecting a single episode from one of the trips to Cazadero, when one of the boys dared me to try him out on a hike where I had previously had some wonderful trout fishing.

The western part of Sonoma County is rugged country. The mountains are rocky and steep, the trees frequently give way to thorny brush, and the streams, torrents in the wet season, are filled with boulders and alternate between deep, treacherous "holes" and dashing cataracts and falls. Little Austin, that we chose for our trip, was the site of old mining activities. A large deposit of magnesite had led to the building of a short, narrow-gauge railway, which at the time of our hike was chiefly a memory. With many miles to cover, we started early, using the old railway where practicable, following the creek banks most of the time, breaking our way through brush, clambering over rocks, edging around shaly slides and above sheer drops into deep water, fighting our way through briars and making unpleasantly close contacts with nettles and poison oak, and finally reaching our goal, the quiet headwaters of Austin, where I had camped as a high school boy and caught trout without limit. Fishing on this latter occasion was decidedly limited.

After our cold lunch and in a declining sun, we retraced our steps. Had not Sam been a sturdy lad, I should have had to carry him over some of the bad spots on our return. With practically no useful sight but lots of physical and moral courage, currently called by an Anglo-Saxon monosyllable, Sammy made the hard trip back but was so weary that he fairly shouted for joy when we broke through the last thicket and emerged on the old wagon road. An easy downhill walk of some two miles brought us back to camp and a welcome supper, such as the Lions' chef knew how to prepare for

hungry boys. Then the campfire, storytelling and entertainment; and a very weary Sammy crept into his bunk. I sat on, chatting with the men about the fire, who found it hard to believe that an almost totally blind boy could have made such a hard, hazardous hike, practically unaided, except for such courtesies as any blind person must in all common sense accept. I am afraid that some of the more conservative shook their heads a bit over my own daring—but! Sam ventured into business by himself only a few years later and made a success of it. That inner fortitude and the initiative he displayed as a boy served him well as a man.

SELFISH GET BORED WITH LIFE

In an article entitled "Riches At Your Fingertips," in the January issue of the *American Magazine,* Muncie's Judge Mario Pieroni offers inspiration and some words of courage to those approaching the new year with fear and foreboding.

Judge Pieroni not only is blind himself but is married to a blind woman. On the opening page of the article is a photograph showing Judge and Mrs. Pieroni in their living room with their three normal children and the jurist's Seeing Eye dog.

In writing about his life and work, Judge Pieroni takes a philosophic view and states: "Anyone who gets bored with life is not only selfish but just plain crazy." "Jane (Mrs. Pieroni) and I strive to live like other people because we have learned that self-reliance is a very precious asset to acquire in life. Too many people in the world today, we believe, are trying too hard to achieve security at the price of their independence and self-reliance. They talk about the rights they are entitled to, and try to avoid facing up to their responsibilities as citizens of the world. You can't live fully with an attitude like that. It is no fun, even if you can be, to be smothered with kindness. Jane and I know that.

"Everyone has some sort of handicap in life, social or physical, and I believe that is to the good. It forces us to struggle." "If you try to give of yourself, instead of spending most of your energy demanding your just deserts, you will usually find people gravitating to you and accepting you in the community, regardless of your particular circumstances in life.

"I'm looking forward to the New Year because there are so many things I want to do. There are so many people I want to know better, so many things I want to learn to do better—and so many places I and my family want to explore."

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NOTES FROM THE FOUNDATION LIBRARY

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"A Comparative Study of the Speech of Blind and Sighted Children," by Donald M. Brieland is a summary of the author's doctoral dissertation which was presented at the University of Minnesota in June 1949, and was published in *Speech Monographs* for March, 1950. Eighty-four congenitally blind children ranging in age from twelve to eighteen were matched with control subjects from a Minnesota high school. The subjects were matched individually on the basis of age, sex, socio-economic status and residence (rural or urban). None of the subjects had training in speech courses, although all subjects had had oral composition in English courses.

The performance of each subject was recorded and filmed. All subjects wore dark glasses and so the film did not provide a clue as to blindness. The performances thus recorded were judged by ten university teachers of speech in random order. According to the study, the findings failed to show the inferiority in the use of the voice which the literature on speech of the blind would lead one to expect. Apparently, the major speech problems of the blind child are those concerned with bodily action rather than with voice.

"Regional Differences in the Prevalence of Blindness," by Ralph G. Hurlin and Walter M. Perkins, appeared in the *Social Security Bulletin* for September 1950. The authors note that, although satisfactory state estimates cannot be made now because of lack of adequate data, sufficient knowledge of difference in prevalence of blindness exists to permit useful regional comparisons. Of the five areas into which they have divided the country, the southeast has the highest rate and the northwest the lowest rate. The authors consider three factors of special importance as affecting prevalence of blindness in a given state or region of this country. They are general health conditions, age distribution of population and the population's racial composition. The racial factor does not reflect a true biological influence but rather the fact that, for social and economic reasons, poor health conditions usually take far greater toll of non-white than of white persons in all regions.

"Instructional Guide for Use in Vocational Schools Providing Training for Blind Persons," by J. Hiram Chappell, was published by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in 1950. It is a manual to be used by personnel engaged in the instruction of blind persons. The manual is divided into five main parts: the pattern of training; shop practice; the metal shop; examples of jobs in production and service industries; and special tools useful to the blind.

"The Causes of Blindness in England and Wales," by Arnold Sorsby, is a report of the Medical Research Council of Great Britain, published in 1950. The study is based on 19,149 registered blind persons. Although the statistics given do not present a complete picture of the causes of blindness in England and Wales, the author states that the study gives a fair sample for these countries of the causes of blindness between 1933 and 1943.

A MUSIC SECTION ADVOCATED FOR THE A.A.W.B.

HERBERT C. TRENEER

DURING THE 1947 CONFERENCE of the A.A.W.B., which was held at the Lord Baltimore Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland, a group of interested delegates met informally to explore the possibilities of establishing a standing committee on music. It was agreed that if such a committee were established within the framework of the A.A.W.B., blind musicians and piano tuners and instructors of the blind in these departments would be enabled to assume a more important role in the deliberations of future conferences than was then feasible through existing channels.

A resolution requesting the appointment of a standing committee on music was accordingly endorsed by those present, and this subsequently received the approval of the A.A.W.B. board of directors, who authorized Dr. Francis Cummings to take the initial steps relative to the formation of the committee.

The newly formed standing committee on music held its first series of meetings during the Easter vacation of 1948 at the Lighthouse for the Blind, New York, N. Y., through the good offices of Mr. Stanley Wartenberg, and agreed that the main objective of the committee should be an effort to ameliorate the condition of blind musicians and piano tuners through every feasible medium with special reference to the securing of gainful employment.

Since the committee was formed, it has established several regional music committees, and music clubs in various areas of the United States and Canada, whose objectives are similar in character to those of the parent group. During the 1950 conference of the A.A.W.B., the standing committee on music sponsored a program which included the presentation of six papers dealing with various aspects of music and piano tuning.

A resolution was also presented by the committee to the board of directors requesting permission to capitalize on the interest which has been manifested in its activities through an effort to expand the existing committee into a music section if and when a minimum of fifty paid-up members are secured who would logically fit into a section of this character.

Prior to the actual formation of the proposed music section an amendment to the constitution of the A.A.W.B. will be required, but the committee does not anticipate any serious difficulty on this score if the desired number of members who are willing to become identified with a music section can be secured.

All members and prospective members of the A.A.W.B. who may desire to join the proposed music section are urged to write to Mr. Alfred Allen, Secretary-General of the A.A.W.B., c/o American Foundation for the Blind, stating that they wish to enroll in the music section if and when it is formed and enclosing the prescribed membership fee of five dollars.

Herbert C. Treneer of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto, Ontario, is chairman of the standing committee on music of the American Association of Workers for the Blind.

All correspondence addressed to Mr. Allen during his tour of the Union of South Africa will be attended to by his office staff, and those who are joining for the first time may temporarily identify themselves with one of the existing sections of the A.A.W.B. until such time as the music section becomes an accomplished fact.

APPOINTMENTS

W. C. GILL

William Crabin Gill has succeeded Spencer Phillips as superintendent of the Louisiana State School for the Blind. The appointment by the State Board of Education became effective November 1, 1950, the positions of superintendent and principal being combined under one head by action of the Board. Mr. Gill had served as acting superintendent since July 1 at which time Mr. Phillips resigned due to illness. For the past eight years he had been principal of the school and prior to that time had been a member of the faculty of the Virginia School for the Blind for sixteen years.

Mr. Gill received the bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and the master's from Louisiana State University. He is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi, and Phi Kappa Phi professional and honorary societies.

F. G. NELMS

Frederick Glenn Nelms has succeeded J. W. Williams as superintendent of the Georgia Academy for the Blind.

Mr. Nelms had been counselor for the blind in the Atlanta area, under the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the State Department of Education since 1945, and prior to that was principal or superintendent of various Georgia schools for a period of twenty-one years. He received both the bachelor's and the master's degree in education from the University of Georgia, and later did special work at the University of Florida.

Mrs. Nelms also has a master's degree from the University of Georgia and taught for several years prior to their marriage. Mr. and Mrs. Nelms have two daughters.

JOHN F. MUNGOVAN

John F. Mungovan has succeeded John J. Buckley as Director of the Division of the Blind in the state of Massachusetts.

Mr. Mungovan had been connected with the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare since 1934, except for a period from 1941 to 1945 when he served in the United States Army, rising from the rank of captain to that of colonel. From October 1946 to October 1947 he had educational leave to study at Boston College School of Social Work.

He holds the Ph.B. and the M.S.W. degrees from Boston College and is the author of a pamphlet, *Medical Care in Old Age Assistance*. He is a member of many organizations, including the Massachusetts Conference of Social Work, the American Public Welfare Association, the National Conference of Catholic Charities and the American Association of Social Workers.

Sixteen deaf and blind children were burned to death on December 20, 1950, in a fire that destroyed the dormitory of the Okayama Prefectural School for the Deaf and Blind. Eighty others escaped.